

Deaf Culture Question of the Week – Mar. 7 - 11, 2011
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We appreciate your time in completing our short survey. We want to especially hear from our parents. See bottom of this question for the link to our survey.

Which is an example of an instrumental classifier?

- a. CL:1-girl-approaches-me
- b. CL:clawhand-pick-up-tennis-ball
- c. CL:clawhand-clump-of-objects-are-located-there
- d. CL:BB-rolling-hilly-landscape-surrounded-me

Scroll down for the answer.

Answer: “b” CL:clawhand-pick-up-tennis-ball – When a signer uses a handshape to show how an object is handled or used the signer is using an instrumental classifier. In this example, the hand is conforming to the shape of the tennis ball. It is also an example in ASL of verb showing agreement with the noun (object).

If the object was a marble the handshape would change in the predicate – pick up marble to a CL:G. The thumb and the index finger would conform to the size of the marble. If the object were a basketball the handshapes would change to two claw handshapes conforming to the size and shape of the basketball. If the object being picked up changed to a stack of books the handshapes would change to CL:bent-b to show fingers bent under the stack of books.

Think about the different classifier handshapes that would be used to convey the meaning of “to turn.” Suppose the “turning” was of the following objects: the knob on a watch, a door handle, a jar lid, a water main valve, a playing card, a sheet of paper on a desk, a toy “matchbox” car. How many different classifier handshapes did you use? Did your handshape conform to the size and shape of the object you were handling in your imagination?

These are examples of instrumental classifiers. When the signer’s hand(s) conform to the size and shape of an object that is handled an instrument classifier is being used.

Please take a few minutes to complete the DCQW Survey:

DCQW has been published weekly during the school year since January 2008. We want to collect information about who reads DCQW, how you use it, which kinds of questions you like best, etc. We created a short survey to collect information. It is completely anonymous. Please take a few moments to complete our survey. Your feedback will be greatly appreciated.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/L7RQNVX>

Note: All previous issues of DCQW are archived at the Washington School for the Deaf website: www.wsd.wa.gov